TONY WILLIAMS, the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Williams of Pamplin was among the Wolverine Gridders recognized at the annual Prince Edward Fall Sports Banquet recently. Pictured are from left to right are Kevin Flippen, Most Improved; Greg Watson, Best Offensive Player, Most Valuable Player, T. C. Coleman Award and Press and Radio Award; Tony Williams, Sportsmanship; Dale Shumaker, Sportsmanship; and Craig Smith, Best Defensive Player.

The Christmas story

Music heard during the Christmas season has changed greatly during the last 50 years, combining sacred and secular elements that formerly were separate.

Like many of the customs and practices associated with the holiday celebration, the music too has become an amalgamation of elements as old as the calendar itself, according to Larry Robinson, associate professor of music at Virginia Commonwealth University.

History indicates many of the trappings of the holiday were adapted from the pagan (Druid) celebration of the winter solstice (the birthday of the sun—passing of the shortest day of the year), Robinson said.

Although the birth of Christ, is said by some historians to have occurred in late March or April by our calendar, the Church counteracted the pagan ritual holding its own observance in mid-winter, he noted.

"From this we see the earliest mix of sacred and secular elements in our celebration of Christmas," said Robinson, "a blending which has now carried into the music."

"In recent centuries the Church retained the traditional music styles at Christmas, but during the past 10 or 15 years we have begun to see the crossover, or blending, of sacred or secular elements," said Robinson.

"Much of that music seemed to carry the theme of the era in which it originated. The music, for example, altered as we moved out of the 19th century Romantic movement and into the Victorian period."

In the early years of the Church and during the first centuries, an enormous amount of music developed, predominantly in the Gregorian fashion (of a single, simple melody with little or no accompaniment), according to Robinson.

"A major renaissance in music was seen during the Protestant Reformation," he said, "a period which also brought a great deal of more complex music that included several melodies and elaborate accompaniments. Much of it is devoted to the Christian Church."

The seasonal works of the great composers of the 18th century, he said, have been overlooked in modern times in favor of the shorter, 19th century anthems which are more easily incorporated into normal church services.

"The styles grew so far apart over the years that what one heard in the department stores (at Christmas) or nightclubs was entirely different from that heard in church," Robinson said, "but just in the last decade or so, the traditional music in many religious denominations has been supplanted by the popular styles."

"Much of this movement came as an attempt to keep the young people in the Church," he added.

Robinson expects the music will continue to change and that "music which is not popular at the moment, may be 20 years from now."

He said of the published church music, "there is as much written for Christmas as for the rest of the year. In addition to the anthems and cantatas, many churches are now incorporating dramatizations in Christmas liturgies."

"These productions which appear to be new, closely resemble the masques and miracle plays of medieval England," he added.

The familiar "What Child Is This" sung during the Christmas season is but another example of something secular-turned-sacred over the centuries.

The song's text was written in the 19th century and placed to the melody of "Greensleeves" which actually is known to be an old secular love song composed enturies earlier, according to Robinson.

Christmas carols, he indicated, "began really as a dance as much as song with many of them originating in the 15th and 16th centuries." Unfortunately, the dances did not survive time, geographic and language barriers as did the songs themselves, some with refrains still sung in another language.

He cites the well known "Angels We Have Heard On High", for instance, which carries the Latin refrain "Gloria in Excelsis Deo."

Works of Art

Some of the more elaborate greeting cards, particularly those featuring reproductions of famous masters, are worthy of framing in themselves, to be displayed at Christmas time or even around the calendar.

Historic house will be open for the public Dec. 26

The public is invited to tour one of the oldest inhabited homes in Appomattox County this Christmas.

The Mount Comfort plantation, better known as the Dean John's place, will be open to the public from 12:00 noon until 4:00 PM, December 26.

The home was originally built in the late 1700's and was named "Mount Comfort" by the Duval family.

Major William Duval, one of the earliest residents of the home was a prominent Virginia lawyer and an officer in the Revolutionary War. During the middle 1800's the home was sold to Captain Dean Johns, C.S.A., the first commissioner of revenue for Appomattox.

Mount Comfort as it stands today is a beautiful 14 room country manor white frame house with green shutters and roof, three stories high with full basement. The house sits atop a hill on 46 acres and has a picturesque view of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The home is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Guild and is located on Route 711 just off Route 26 approximately 4 miles north of Appomattox.

Mr. Guild, formerly a resident of Pennsylvania believes he is a decendant of Dr. Lafayette Guild, General Robert E. Lee's medical director during the Civil War. Mrs. Guild, formerly Hope Harris was born in Franklin, Virginia and raised in the Lynchburg area.

The Guild's have graciously opened their home for this Christmas tour so if you are interest in seeing a piece of authentic colonial history do stop by.

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Ice, wind and snow

Prepare for winter weather

With the first day of winter just beyond us and Christmas Day Thursday, Appomattox Countiens can look forward to snowy white country scenes, hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows by the fireplace, and the other delights associated with the cold months.

Gone are the dog days of summer, the staggering, hateful heat which burned the crops and made life miserable from June through August.

Cooler times are upon us, but the season we are entering is not without its discomforts, and, of course, its hazards.

Winter storms - blizzards, ice storms, and related precipitation - can be a serious hazard to people in Appomattox County, according to W. R. Britton, director of emergency services in Appomattox County.

Britton says the first line of protection is to keep posted on weather conditions in the surrounding area through television, radio and newspapers.

A few hours of warning before a storm can be the key to avoiding being caught in it, or at least to be better prepared to cope with it, according to Britton.

He adds that to take full advantage of weather forecasts and warnings, Appomattox Countians should learn and understand terms commonly used.

A heavy snow warning usually means an expected snowfall of four inches or more in a 12-hour period, or six inches or more in a 24-hour period. Warnings of **snow flurries, snow squalls, or blowing and drifting snow** are important mainly because visibility may be reduced and roads may become slippery or blocked.

A blizzard is the most dangerous of all winter storms. It combines cold air, heavy snow, and strong winds that blow the snow about and may reduce visibility to only a few yards. **A blizzard warning** is issued when the Weather Service expects considerable snow and winds of 35 miles per hour or more. A **severe blizzard warning** means that a very heavy snowfall is expected, with winds of at least 45 miles per hour and temperatures of 10 degrees or lower.

Freezing rain or freezing drizzle is forecast when expected rain is likely to freeze as soon as it strikes the ground, putting a coating of ice or glaze on roads and everything else that is exposed. If a substantial layer of ice is expected to accumulate from the freezing rain, an ice storm is forecast.

Sleet is small particles of ice, usually mixed with rain. If enough sleet accumulates on the ground, it will make the roads slippery.

Residents of Appomattox County, particularly those in the more remote rural areas, should be prepared for isolation at home, according to Britton.

There is always the chance that a super storm will make it impossible to get out of the house for as much as a week or more.

Safeguards against isolation include having on hand an adequate supply of heating fuel. Regular supplies may be curtailed by storm conditions. If necessary, conserve fuel by keeping the house cooler than usual, or by "closing off" some rooms temporarily. Also, have available some kind of emergency heating equipment and fuel so you could keep at least one room of your house warm enough to be livable. This could be a camp stove with fuel, or a supply of wood or coal if you have a fireplace. If your furnance is controlled by a thermostat and your electricity is cut off by a storm, the furnace probably would not operate and you would need emergency heat.

Stock an emergency supply of food and water, as well as emergency cooking equipment such as a camp stove. Some of this food should be of the type that does not require refrigeration or cooking.

Make sure you have a battery-powered radio and exra batteries on hand, so that if your electric power is cut off you could still hear weather forecasts, information, and advice broadcasts from local officials. Also, lanterns or flashlights would be needed.

In addition, you should have on hand the simple tools and equipment needed to fight a fire. Be certain that all family members know how to take precautions that would prevent fire as such a time, when the help of the fire department may not be available.

If roads are passable, Britton says, you should travel only if absolutely necessary, and then be sure your car is in good working condition, has a full tank of gas, and an emergency winter storm supply, including items such as a container of sand, shovel, windshield scraper, tow chain or rope, flashlight and sleeping bag. It's also a good idea to have with you heavy gloves or mittens, overshoes, extra woolen socks, and winter headgear to cover your head and face.

If you must travel, travel only by daylight, keep to the major roads, try not to travel alone, keep the radio on, and, above all, exercise absolute caution as per road conditions.

After the storm, be sure not to over exert yourself when cleaning sidewalks, since cold weather itself, even without exertion, puts a strain on your heart.

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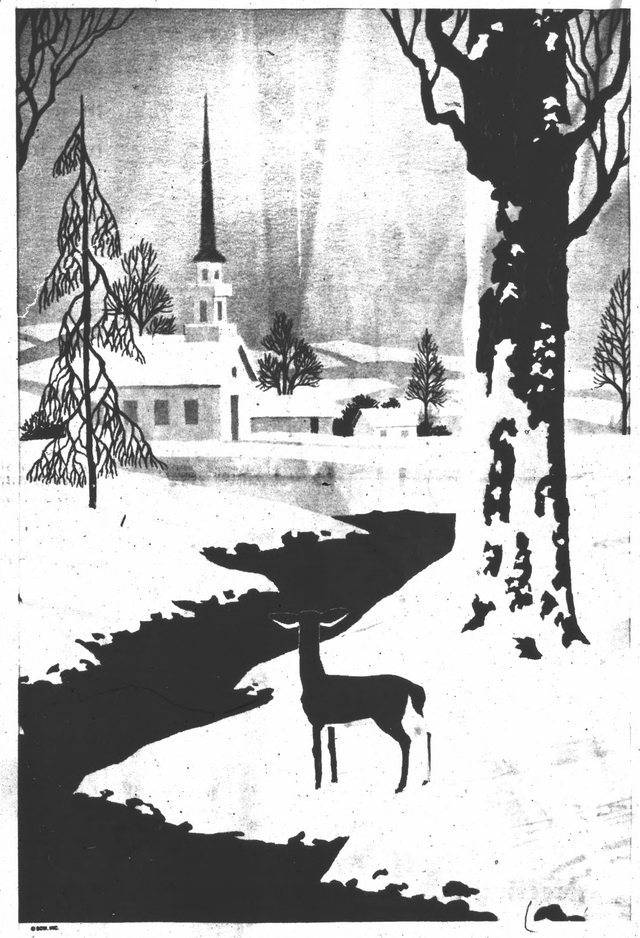

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